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ABSTRACT

The World Bank was one of the five convening agencies for the 1990 Education for All (EFA) Conference held in Jomtien (Thailand) and the Dakar (Netherlands) World Education Conference of 2000. World Bank lending for basic education in the five years following Jomtien increased 500% compared to the previous five years. Yet for all the increased financing, and in spite of some real progress, the Jomtien goals were not met, and many countries are not currently on track for meeting the even more ambitious Dakar goals. This paper examines lessons learned over the past 10 years. It draws on 20 case studies to examine progress in achieving EFA goals. The case studies represent a selection of nine thematic studies, along with 11 countries that have made progress on one or more key dimensions of EFA. The thematic studies deal with areas important to achievement of EFA goals: school construction, user fees, language of instruction, textbooks, school grants, assessment of student learning, conflict and post-conflict countries, EFA planning, and girls' education. The 2000 Dakar framework for action outlines six EFA objectives: (1) expanding and improving early childhood education; (2) ensuring that by 2015 all children complete primary education of good quality; (3) ensuring access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; (4) achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015; (5) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality by 2015; and (6) focusing on learning outcomes. (BT)

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EDUCATION
THE WORLD BANK

EFA: The Lessons of Experience

The Impact of Policy in 20 Case Studies

SO 034 862

Prepared for the Accelerating Action Towards EFA Conference

Amsterdam, April 2002

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EFA: The Lessons of Experience

1. Introduction

1.1 The World Bank was one of the five convening agencies for the 1990 Education For All Conference held in Jomtien, and the Dakar World Education Conference of 2000. It was the largest external source of financing for education programs over this period, lending US$F19.7 billion for this purpose in the ten years between Jomtien and Dakar. Its lending for basic education in the five years following Jomtien increased 500% compared to the previous five years (5.1 billion dollars compared to 997 million dollars). By 96-00, education lending had increased to 7 % of total World Bank lending, up from 4.8 % in 86-90; basic education's share had increased from 25.7% to 47% of education lending. The Bank also increased its support for girls' education—almost half of the Bank's lending on education between 1995 and 2001 has supported programs for which there was a significant girls' education component. Lending for girls' education under the Bank's concessionary IDA program has been highest in the two regions, Africa and South Asia, where the challenges on girls' education are greatest.

1.2 Yet for all of the increased financing, and in spite of some very real progress, the Jomtien goals were not met, and many countries are not currently on track for meeting the even more ambitious Dakar goals. This paper looks at lessons learned over the past ten years. It draws on 20 case studies to examine progress in achieving EFA goals. The case studies represent a selection of 9 thematic studies, along with 11 countries that have made progress on one or more key dimensions of EFA. The thematic studies deal with areas important to achievement of EFA goals: school construction, user fees, language of instruction, textbooks, school grants, assessment of student learning, conflict and post-conflict countries, EFA planning, and girls' education. The implicit question which the paper attempts to answer is the following: "What reason is there to think the Dakar framework for EFA can succeed when previous efforts have not?"

1.3 The 2000 Dakar framework for action outlines six EFA objectives: (i) expanding and improving early childhood education; (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children complete primary education of good quality; (iii) ensuring access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015; (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015; and (vi) focusing on learning outcomes. The Miliennium Goals include only two of these objectives: universal primary completion by 2015 and elimination of gender disparities by 2005, but this paper takes the perspective that successful achievement of these broader objectives will require a commitment to the Dakar framework in its entirety.

2. Two core considerations

2.1 At the most fundamental level, the lessons of experience point to two essential considerations that must be addressed in a country-specific manner.

- achieving EFA goals means addressing the inequitable distribution of educational opportunities in-country. EFA goals will not be achieved by simply accelerating programs to expand access.

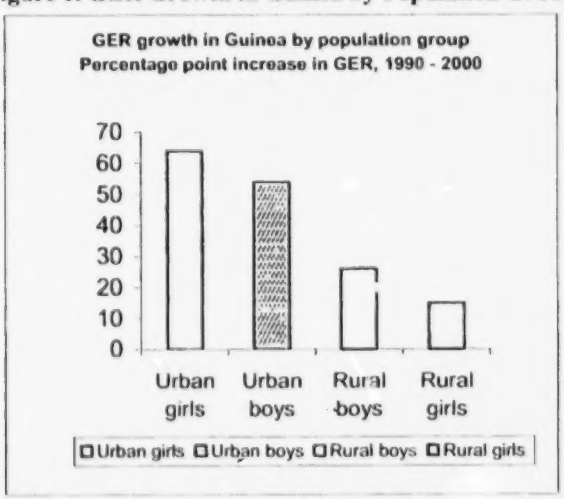
- if the expansion of education systems to meet access goals undermines learning outcomes, then even this achievement will be fleeting. Many developing countries appear to have systematically under-invested in quality.

2.2 **Equitable distribution of educational opportunities.** Children who are out of school are more likely than not to have the following characteristics: they are poor, female, live in more remote and rural areas, and often belong to minority ethnic groups. In other words, they are typically the most disadvantaged children in society *writ large*. In countries with low rates of enrollment, the pool of disadvantaged children is large and thus the choices these countries' education leaders make will determine which group of children are brought into the school system next.

2.3 In Guinea, as Figure 1 shows, there has been a sequencing, still in progress, that improved enrollment first for urban boys and girls and then proceeded to improve enrollments for rural boys and girls. When the decade began, urban boys were well ahead of all other groups in terms of GER, but urban girls made strong progress over the decade. Taking Conakry out of the urban sample showed that the major regional and prefectoral capitals had increased their urban enrollments by a remarkable 65 to 66 percentage points in Upper, Middle and Lower Guinea, and by 51 points in Forest Guinea. The national GER meanwhile had climbed from 31% to 61% between 1990 and 2000. But over the same period, in rural areas, enrollment rates climbed as little as 21 percentage points.

2.4 Brazil followed a similar sequencing, but is much further along in this process, and few gender and rural biases remain for lower primary schooling.

Figure 1. GER Growth in Guinea by Population Group



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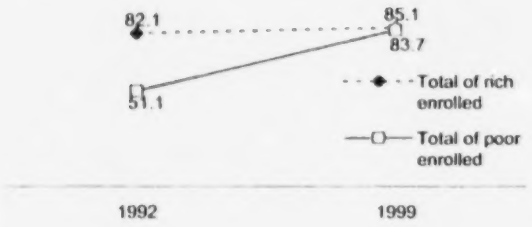
2.5 Unlike Guinea and Brazil, Uganda adopted a "big bang" strategy by which the floodgates of demand were opened through the elimination of school fees and other direct costs. Uganda quickly narrowed primary enrollment gaps between rich and poor and between boys and girls. The wealth bias that had characterized access to primary education prior to UPE was all but eliminated in four years. In addition, the improvements in female access to primary education have been enormous. Latest data show virtually no gap between male and female net enrolment ratios (89.3 percent vs. 88.8 percent).

Figure 2. Improved Access to Education for Poor in Brazil by Consumption Quintile 1992 and 1999



2.6 In Indonesia, a large expansion of enrollments also served to narrow enrollment rates across the income distribution. Whereas in 1993 the primary net enrollment ratio was 87% in the poorest quintile, it was 93% in the richest quintile. By 2000 the ratio was 91% in the poorest quintile and 92% in the richest. At the junior secondary level the net enrollment ratio almost doubled in the poorest quintile whereas in increased by only a few percentage points in the richest quintile.

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Figure 3. Indonesia Primary Net Enrollment Ratio 1993 and 2000
(percent)

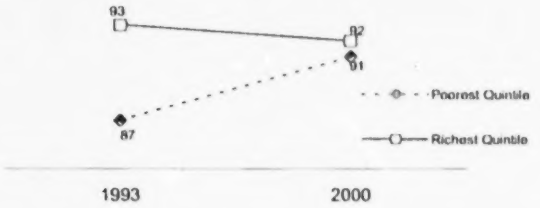
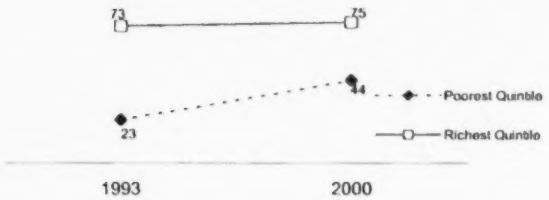


Figure 4. Indonesia Junior Secondary Net Enrollment Ratio 1993 and 2000
(percent)



2.7 As enrollment rates increase the pool of unschooled disadvantaged children obviously diminishes. However, the children remaining out of school often constitute an increasingly more challenging clientele in logistical and managerial terms. The case of education for poor, rural girls is an example in many countries, where the constraints to their participation in the education system become more apparent as the system grows. Furthermore, the educational needs of the most rural children, nomadic child, the disabled or orphaned child, the child belonging to an ethnic minority that speaks a language vastly different than the mainstream population are much more difficult (and costly) to address. What also makes it more challenging to address the needs of the "last ten percent" is that competing demands for educational resources become more acute. They are the hardest, and most costly, to reach.

2.8 An immediate challenge in terms of addressing the challenges of reaching the disadvantaged children, and one which will be an important benchmark for progress against the 2015 target, will be the extent to which sound progress is made on the 2005 EFA goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education. Given the wide gender disparities in many countries, there is almost no prospect for completely eliminating the differences by 2005. It would seem appropriate, then, to set achievable and meaningful intermediate goals—for example, to reach gender parity in terms of grade one intake by 2005, to ensure that this initial gender equity is maintained as the 2005 cohort moves through the system, and to ensure that all country EFA plans specifically propose ways of eliminating gender biases at higher levels of the system. Without such plans for secondary and higher education, the current biases at the lower levels will persist.

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2.9 **Investing in learning.** Ideally, country progress toward EFA would be measured in terms of the proportion of children who have acquired the basic skills and knowledge necessary for life. This would include local relevance and international competitiveness. Unfortunately, such data on learning outcomes are generally not available; the best proxy for most countries currently is the primary completion rate (PCR). If we take this measure, 89 of 155 countries are projected to fall short of the Dakar goal of universal primary completion by 2015; another 30 countries appear to be on track, although as better data on learning become available, these numbers will need to be revisited. These 119 countries are collectively referred to as the EFA countries for purposes of this paper.

Challenges in Assessing Country Progress on EFA

The indicator most commonly relied upon in assessing countries' progress towards EFA is the primary Gross enrollment Ratio (GER). The GER offers the advantages of being easily calculated and widely available. However, it also has some significant shortcomings – it does not accommodate and adjust for system inefficiencies such as repetition and dropout, and it does not provide information on how many children actually complete the education cycle.

A more satisfactory indicator is the Primary Completion Rate (PCR), and the Bank promotes greater reliance on the PCR as a measure of progress towards EFA. The PCR reports on the proportion of children which is of primary completion age which actually completes the primary school cycle. It thus adjusts somewhat for dropout and repetition rates, and also provides a reasonably accurate estimate of the proportion of children which has received sufficient schooling to achieve lifelong numeracy and literacy.

The difference between the GER and PCR can be quite profound: the average GER for the EFA countries is around 76%, while the PCR is just 49%. PCRs, however, are much less readily available than the GER and are sometimes quite difficult to obtain in gender disaggregated form. Their accuracy is sometimes also affected by the availability of population estimates – the older the population data, the less accurate estimated PCRs are likely to be.

Given the shortcomings of the GER and the limited availability of PCRs, the most reliable assessment of countries' progress towards EFA is obtained if information is drawn from the following set of indicators, all of which should be gender disaggregated: (a) Grade One intake, which is a measure of short-term enrollment gains or losses; (b) PCRs, which provide an overall indicator of long-term success; (c) GERs, which are a measure of short- and medium-term progress; and (d) adult literacy rates.

Even GER data, however, are not always readily available for recent years. In such cases, efforts are being made under the rubric of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process, to improve sector information by drawing on a range of data sources, including household surveys and other country level data sources. These data can be helpful in estimating GERs and assessing the level of primary completion amongst different age cohorts. As a backup source of information, these data can provide valuable and up-to-date information in highly disaggregated form.

2.10 There are always many paths to the same objective. In the case of Education For All, a country can rapidly increase the educational opportunities by focusing on supply issues through an intensive school construction campaign and the mass and rapid

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recruitment of teachers, as well as targeting demand issues through the reduction or elimination of school fees. Countries can also embrace a more gradual strategy, incrementally increasing the number of school places over time, while ensuring that education quality is maintained or improved. In the decade since Jomtien, each approach has had strong adherents. Countries such as Malawi, for instance, sought to achieve universal coverage as quickly as possible. By eliminating school fees, and making more intensive use of school infrastructure, it made remarkable progress in raising gross enrollment rates. Uganda, East Timor and, more recently, Tanzania, have followed a similar approach. The floodgates of demand in these countries were opened through the elimination of school fees and other direct costs to education such as obligatory school uniforms. Supply was increased exponentially through crash programs of teacher recruitment and school construction. In these cases, there have been three typical implications:

(1) Special emergency programs were established that deeply modified or suspended existing norms and practice for teacher recruitment, training; and deployment; school construction; curriculum content and delivery; and the production and provision of pedagogical materials.

(2) The intensive growth of the system constituted an increased management burden for the entire education management apparatus (e.g., administration, planning, budgeting, personnel, inspection).

(3) Rapid expansion, within existing resource constraints meant that the conditions of instruction were usually challenged, with overcrowded classes, less-prepared and supervised teachers, classrooms meeting more modest construction standards, and the absence or scarcity of pedagogical materials.

Uganda: Achieving Education for All

During the 1970s and the 1980s political instability and economic mismanagement was succeeded by civil war, and education in Uganda survived only through community support for teachers and schools. The slow process of recovery began in 1986. An Education Policy Review Committee was established in 1987 which established UPE as a goal and determined strategies to achieve it. Despite this, at the beginning of 1990s, the gross primary enrollment ratio was only 87%, basic inputs were lacking, and Ugandan households were paying too much for primary education. The decision in 1996 to remove fees for up to four children per family removed that burden and also sent a signal that education is important. An additional 2.3 million children (1.1 million girls and 1.2 million boys) responded immediately, bringing the total primary enrollment to 5.7 million in 1997. By 2001 total primary enrollment had reached 6.9 million. This experience demonstrates that financial constraints on the demand side were by far the most important reason for low primary enrollment.

In support of the decision to introduce UPE, the Government of Uganda (GOU) increased funding for education from 2.6% of GNP in 1996 to 4% in 2000. By 2001, 32 percent of the total discretionary budget was allocated to education (up from 24 percent in 1996) and, within it, the share of primary education reached 70%. Beyond these budgetary efforts, GOU also made remarkable progress in ensuring the availability of funds through increased accountability and transparency. With budget support from the Bank and a number of major bilateral donors, and additional funds from HIPC, GOU has provided funds directly to schools to help them cope and has improved classroom construction and teacher recruitment modalities. Since the beginning of UPE, the share of funds reaching the schools has gone up to about 90 percent (from about 28 percent in 1996).

GOU also established a formal education sector review process which monitors progress in education every six months. These reviews include all the internal and external partners. Progress is measured through the EFA indicators and the measurement instruments are themselves being strengthened.

Despite this support, inputs were not increased sufficiently to cope with the massive expansion and there are worrying signs of lower quality manifested in high dropout rates and lower achievement levels. In addition to improving quality, the other remaining challenges include the increased demand for secondary and tertiary education within a constrained resource envelope and the shift towards decentralization.

2.11 In the country case studies reviewed, as access increased, there was almost always an initial drop in learning levels. This led in countries like Malawi to increased dropout and repetition and declining interest in education on the part of parents and other stakeholders.

2.12 In Uganda, comparable tests were administered to national random samples (including private schools) of P3 pupils in mathematics and in English, in 1996 (the year before the launching of the UPE initiative) and again in 1999 (the third year of UPE). The English test measured reading, writing and oral performance. The number of pupils who achieved a satisfactory score on the mathematics test declined from 48 percent in 1996 to 31 percent in 1999. In English, on the oral test, the percentage performing satisfactorily declined from 92 percent to 56 percent. On the reading test, only 11 percent of pupils achieved a satisfactory result in 1999. There were large differences in achievement between pupils in urban and rural schools, and among those in different regions, with those in Kampala outperforming those in the rest of the country.

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2.13 To avoid this decline in learning levels, some countries have attempted to grow their systems "organically", adopting a measured strategy where existing standards for teacher recruitment or classroom construction are applied. This has characterized countries such as Brazil and Guinea. In Guinea, with steady growth averaging 10% annually each year over the past decade, there has been no decline in teacher/student ratios or teacher qualifications and programs put in place to increase quality (though there is no clear evidence of improvements in learning outcomes). In this form, improvements to systems to ensure better quality are instituted first, thus ensuring (theoretically) that each additional child entering the system receives an acceptable quality of instruction. However, this strategy also has consequences:

(1) Educational opportunities are limited, and are rationed, meaning that demand outpaces supply.

(2) The approach may initially deepen existing inequities. When educational opportunities are limited, it is usually the wealthy and those with more political voice that secure these opportunities. The poor and rural populations, and especially poor, rural, girls, are least likely to have access to education.

2.14 Must there always be a trade-off between quality and access? Uganda, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Brazil are among the countries that have recently expressed serious concerns over drops in quality. A review of international assessments shows a consistent and large learning gap between developed and developing countries. The usual progression in most countries, as noted, has been to increase access prior to addressing management capacity and instructional quality. However, some countries have found and adopted win-win strategies, where both quality of access and quality of learning are improved. Further, some efforts to increase quality have forced systems to remove constraints to access and vice versa (e.g., obliging education systems to adopt flexible and more appropriate curricular approaches / or modifying construction standards to make school construction cheaper, or allowing for rental of school facilities). The various scenarios are discussed below.

3. The lessons of experience

3.1 Our review of experience has found no single optimal mix in terms of quality and access, no one best way of ensuring equitable growth. Each country, addressing its own social, political, and economic realities, at different points in its evolution towards EFA, must find its own equilibrium. Countries that give insufficient attention to learning outcomes undermine the sustainability of their education systems. Countries that do not adopt a viable and realistic strategy to address the needs of the disadvantaged end up undermining political support for EFA or creating an inequitable education system.

3.2 So, how can countries achieve EFA without undermining the future growth of the education system? The case studies suggest seven key lessons that can help decision makers chart an appropriate course.

3.3 ***(a) Political commitment to EFA is fundamental:*** An overarching and central lesson that has emerged from the past decade's experience is that EFA is both a technical and a political challenge. Strong political commitment to education as a moving force for development predominates in many successful reforms. When the EFA goals are embraced and supported by political actors as a strategy for development, remarkable progress toward EFA can be made even in the poorest countries. Although there is no surefire blueprint that can be followed to orchestrate this commitment, policy dialogue, public participation and efforts to buffer the impact of difficult political choices all contribute to the possibility that appropriate levels can be mobilized.

3.4 ***(b) Establish a sector-wide strategic framework for EFA***: Pursuing EFA goals will stress existing educational systems, and thus will require a comprehensive optic to understand trade-offs, to identify complementary actions, and recognize which strategies are likely to be most effective. Sector-wide strategies are imperative for guiding and driving the sector agenda. In the past, though, sound sector frameworks were not always well integrated into countries' broader development agenda. Sometimes, sector frameworks were overly ambitious wish lists or, when sound, were stymied by insufficient budgetary and political support from key public actors. The advent of the PRSP process has begun to change this. Now that sector-wide strategic frameworks are being cast within countries' broader development frameworks, and are recognized as being integral to countries' economic and social development, they are being rooted in the context of budgetary resources and development priorities.

3.5 ***(c) Develop strategies that efficiently use resources, today and tomorrow:*** Pursuing EFA requires additional resources, particularly given the imperative to move very quickly on this initiative: The majority of the countries in our review that made significant strides toward EFA did so in part by increasing the availability of financial resources and, often, by improving efficiencies in resource use. Strategies that focus on efficient use of existing resources will have more sustainable outcomes.

3.6 ***(d) Identify strategies that specifically address the educational needs of the disadvantaged***: Meeting EFA goals is rarely an issue of simply accelerating existing expansion strategies. The needs of the educationally disadvantaged are often distinct and more intensive than those of children who are already benefiting from schooling. Special targeted programs and compensatory policies are often fundamental to improving educational coverage and outcomes for the disadvantaged.

3.7 ***(e) Explicitly address the access/quality continuum:*** EFA strategies must incorporate an understanding of the interaction of access and education achievement acknowledging that although trade-offs may be necessary, both will need to be addressed if EFA goals are to attained and maintained.

3.8 ***(f) Delegating responsibility and accountability to the local level can be highly effective:*** The evidence in our review was mixed in terms of decentralization strategies. Some countries successfully created local political entities with decision-making power; others continued to allocate funds from a central authority. However,

successful EFA strategies found ways to ensure that resources reach the school and classroom level in a consistent and responsive manner; provide flexibility to local school managers to respond to local conditions; and create local accountability structures.

3.9 ***(g) Looking ahead to ensure sustainability of the system is important:*** The EFA endeavor, and the tight timeframe set for its attainment, has activated governments and donors around the globe. Technical support and additional resourcing are being made available to support country-level initiatives in hitherto unprecedented extent. Additional resource support is helpful, but the gains made under the EFA initiative must be sustained. Enhanced efficiency in resource use is critical to this. This includes the rationalization and professionalization of the teaching corps. Teachers absorb the bulk of recurrent resources in the sector. They are the linchpin in efforts to attract and keep children in school, and ensure they obtain a quality education. Countries need them to do more, need them to work in more difficult places, and need them to work with populations that have special needs.

3.10 The following figure shows the relative importance of these dimensions in the set of country case studies considered.

Figure 5. Education Policy Characteristic by Country

	Political Commitment	Strategic EFA framework	Resources availability +Efficiency	Focus on disadvantaged	Reform Sequencing	Local support for learning
Guinea	•	x	x	•	•	x
Egypt	x		x	•		x
Bangladesh	x		x	x		x
Uganda	x	x	x	•	•	x
Malawi	x		•	x		
Cambodia	x		x		•	x
Indonesia	x	x	x	•	x	x
Senegal	x	x	x			
Cuba	x	x	x	x	x	x
India	x	x	•	x	x	x
El Salvador	x	x	•	x	x	x

x This dimension is a strong feature of the country's education sector over the past decade.

• This dimension has been somewhat characteristic of the country's education sector over the past decade.

(a) The central role of political commitment

3.11 Pursuing EFA goals represents both a technical and a political challenge. The different considerations that need to be entertained in order to successfully pursue Education for All objectives requires substantial political "commitment". Choices will need to be made, and thus the preferences of some will have to tabled to achieve the objectives of others. The matrix above, drawn from the case study review of countries making a significant effort in the EFA context, shows that political commitment was one of two features that characterized all of them. Yet the ability of authorities to mobilize

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the political support necessary to make the hard decisions necessary to achieve educational objectives is variable and difficult to control.

3.12 Strong political commitment to education as a moving force for development predominates in many successful reforms. When all principal political actors sector embrace the strengthening of the education as a strategy for development, remarkable progress toward EFA can be made, even in the poorest countries. Strong and persistent political commitment manifests itself in sustained sectoral policy strategies, effective capacity to implement public programs, robust national and sub-national education information systems, rigorous institutional learning mechanisms (research, evaluation, and policy analysis) and broader sharing of information. Education becomes a high priority at all levels within the system, and even difficult or contentious policies are implemented once actors realize the links among economic prosperity, reduction of poverty, and education for all.

3.13 In many instances, the drive for EFA has been initiated and championed by central government or by political leaders. India's District Primary Education Program, China's implementation of the Compulsory Education Law and the Outline for Reform and Development of Education Law, and Brazil's decision to undertake a national assessment system, all share these elements of political commitment, and each country has progressed towards EFA. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Basic Education was given greater prominence in the cabinet, and the president herself publicly promoted basic education and girls' education. In Uganda and Malawi –support from the highest political levels led to the abolition of primary school fees. This required extra public investments in education to help schools meet spiraling demand and to compensate schools for their lost income. In Uganda, funding for education increased from 2.6 percent of the GNP in 1996 to 4 percent in 2000. In Malawi, the investment for education increased from 8 percent to 20 percent of the total budget and constituted the main determinant of the increase in the number of students with access to primary education in the decade.

3.14 Sometimes, political commitment to take the hard decisions for EFA can come from civil society. In some cases, the groundswell for EFA came from communities and local initiatives. In other countries, political support and commitment emerged from local innovators and independent local actors' strategies to improve education that were further supported by the public sector and incorporated to the national agenda. For example, in Mali, the development of community schools supported by NGOs and donors, led to broad-based public support for these alternative delivery models, eventually leading to the allocation of public resources in support of community schools. In Bangladesh, NGOs, and the Bangladeshi Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in particular, have institutionalized an effective system of providing an education to well over a million of the poorest rural children – principally girls -- who were not served by the public system. These NGOs have become highly proficient and effective in delivering services to these disadvantaged groups.

3.15 From our review of experience, although crucial to the success of EFA endeavors, "strong" political commitment results from political, historical and socio-economic processes that are hard to predict or orchestrate. Sometimes the "right" forces are in place and sometimes they are not. When political commitment is weak, and economic conditions make political choices in favor of EFA difficult or contentious, there are unfortunately no clear strategies that could be quickly adopted to reverse this predicament.

EFA as a result of strong political leadership...

Guinea provides an especially telling example of political leadership taking on a difficult, but important, policy decision that was necessary to expand access in a resource constrained environment. The re-deployment of teachers in Guinea, is an example of a critical and sensitive reform decision implemented because of the steady effort of the Minister of Education to create a national commitment to the principles of the EFA agenda, and to put a strong team of reformers in place. The Ministry's committed team of managers promoted dialogue with vital actors: teachers, teacher union representatives, local level administrators, parents, school level personnel, sharing responsibility to promote change. Systematic visits to schools, discussions with parents and transparency about the need to re-deploy almost a third of Guinea's teachers (from urban to rural schools, from administrative offices to classrooms, and from secondary to primary schools) were the strategies developed. As a result, the foundation was laid for steady expansion of the system. Over the decade, boys' enrollments doubled and girls' enrollment tripled, after 20 years of stagnation.

And strong political demand...

In El Salvador, local communities organized themselves and developed a self-managed, private form of education administered by associations of rural workers who hired and paid teachers directly from their own financial resources. The government itself started to transfer funds to these innovative community-managed schools (Educación con Participación de la Communidad – EDUCO). This focused effort to promote greater equity, quality and efficiency in the provision of education services was incorporated into the national strategy. The initiative brought schools and teachers to many poor rural areas for the first time. (Uemura, 1999).

3.16 It appears that the potential for political commitment is much higher when countries have strong political leadership and a good measure of public stability and at least some clear prospect of economic growth. There are, however, many situations in which this is not the case. There are countries undergoing or coming out of conflict or other extreme crisis (such as economic instability or a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS). Sometimes the political leadership is simply facing too many competing priorities, too few resources, very weak institutional capacity, questionable political legitimacy, and a lack of social and political cohesion.

3.17 Post-conflict countries are a particularly poignant example. Generally, institutions are weak, with a lack of record keeping, ineffectual decision-making processes and fractured organizational structures. There is usually a massive loss of talent through death or migration, making it difficult for the country to regenerate its own

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talent. There are deeply painful challenges to re-integrate people who have been victimized or traumatized by war, displaced, or who have even been perpetrators of violence (e.g. child soldiers). The psychological and physical needs of these persons are great and the support systems in place to help them are weak. There are usually no processes that provide victims of atrocities with a sense of justice, and cycles of fear and revenge still predominate. There are competing political forces that often bitter former enemies as individuals and interest groups try to establish "the new order." Programs and projects tend to get identified and attached to these political forces. Years of political instability that has resulted from conflict stifles the government's ability to pursue consistent policies over the medium and long term, raise revenue and allocate it wisely. Government finances are in a bleak state of disrepair and need innovative and flexible support to meet recurrent costs.

3.18 There are, however, a number of options available that could help create an environment conducive to the development of political commitment. These must be considered very carefully and with every respect for country sovereignty. Fundamentally there are three main possibilities in this regard. Under the right circumstances, these can create the conditions where political leadership could champion EFA and where civil society could put EFA more firmly on the public agenda.

3.19 ***Promoting policy dialogue***. When there are opportunities for different education stakeholders to interact and exchange views on educational issues in a structured manner, a dynamic that is conducive to developing political commitment to EFA can be created. Sometimes donors or international NGOs have financed forums or other mechanisms where national stakeholders, both governmental and nongovernmental, can exchange perspectives and build the political support necessary to take certain decisions and engage in certain actions. External actors can sometimes play the role of neutral participants in this dialogue, providing a conduit of communication between different stakeholders. Also, external actors sometimes can provide "shelter" to certain stakeholders and their organizations, lending them a certain legitimacy and visibility they might not be able to gain otherwise.

3.20 In Mali, for example, donors supported the creation of the *Groupe Pivot – Education* that grouped together international and national NGOs that were interested in ensuring that community schools would be taken into consideration by government. Donors provided this group with resources and technical support and also served as conduit of interaction with government authorities. This loose association was eventually successful in convincing government authorities to change policies regarding the legitimate status of community schools, thus providing an opportunity for pupils to continue their education in public schools. In Mali today, representatives of NGOs and other non-governmental stakeholders sit on influential government committees overseeing the implementation of major education reforms. In Bolivia, the National Dialogue, which is an institution put in place to determine the strategy to be followed to reduce poverty (and thus feed into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper), is determining how resources generated under the HIPC Initiative will be used to support the education sector.

3.21 ***Building capacity to promote public participation***. Sometimes government and non-governmental stakeholders require specific skills to promote political commitment. The technical analytic skills necessary to develop a strategic framework represent a case in point, as do monitoring and evaluation capabilities. Furthermore, advocacy, ability to use the media, and networking are all skills sets that can be transferred to government and non-governmental actors. The members of the Equity Committee in Guinea, for example were provided with advocacy and social marketing skills that enabled them to mobilize local communities around girls' education.

3.22 In a number of countries, the institutional capacity of parents' associations is being bolstered so that they can have a greater say in local school policy, as well as at other levels of the education system. In Benin, for examples, international NGOs have worked over several years with school level parents' associations to render them more representative, contribute more effectively to the development of their schools, and able to demand accountability from school staff. These projects are now focusing increasing attention on the development of parents' association federations at district, regional and national levels that can communicate parents' concerns with educational authorities in a more effective manner.

3.23 ***Buffering the impact of policy change.*** This is perhaps the option that provides both the greatest promise and danger. Typically, donors provide resources that can "ease" the negative impact of difficult decisions. For example, donors might finance incentive packages for the redeployment of teachers, as was the case in Uganda and Guinea. In the best of circumstances, donors provide tranched budgetary support that enable governments to implement difficult reforms. All the countries participating in the HIPC program constitute examples of this. In Tanzania, for example, with HIPC resources, the government has launched an Education Sector Development Program with a chief aim of increasing access to schools, particularly in poor and underserved areas while alleviating the cost burden on households. Progress has been achieved, particularly at the primary level. Budgets have been increased and school fees have been abolished.

3.24 But for donors and other supporters of EFA, this can create a challenge. Should only "good performers" be rewarded? Are not the "poor performers" the ones most in need of support? How does one deal with the increasing awareness (supported in this review of country case studies) that attempts to leverage political commitment by withholding support from countries are rarely successful and can be counterproductive? The "moving forward" section of this paper suggests the development of a normative framework balancing concepts of "worthiness" and "neediness" to determine optimal investment scenarios. Since strategies relying on positive incentives have a far better track record, this may well be the most important dimension to consider in terms of an overall EFA strategy.

3.25 ***Key lessons with regards to political commitment:***

- *More than any other factor, meeting and sustaining EFA objectives require significant political commitment from a country's leadership and public.*

- *Political commitment for EFA will essentially depend on socio-economic realities within a particular country – economic growth, political stability, and social peace will make it easier to muster the necessary political commitment to support EFA strategies.*
- *Although political commitment cannot be predictably increased through any specific strategy, a number of options can contribute to a more conducive environment, such as:*
    - *Promoting policy dialogue*
    - *Increasing the capacity of the public participation*
    - *Buffering the impact of difficult policy decisions*
- *Political commitment has rarely been successfully leveraged by withholding financing for EFA; however, the effectiveness of any financial support for EFA will depend on the degree of political commitment for EFA that exists within a given country.*

(b) The need for a broad strategic framework for EFA

3.26 Pursuing EFA objectives will inevitably stress education systems, with consequences that will vary depending on the specific strategies that are adopted. The countries observed were better able to handle these stresses when they were the result of conscious choices, rather than unintended consequences.

3.27 A strategic framework charts a country's course towards meeting its objectives in the education sector. It (i) clearly identifies constraints; (ii) analyzes the potential implications of different options that could be considered to address these constraints, estimating the probable costs of these implications; and (iii) helps ensure resources and compensatory actions are targeted to underserved and disadvantaged groups. It provides flexibility to take decisions under continually changing circumstances while maintaining a focus on objectives and milestones. Preferably, this strategic document should have explicit references and linkages to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, if one is in place. The specific elements of a sector-wide strategic framework for EFA efforts will differ from one country to another. However, from our experience, an effective sector-wide strategic framework includes the following elements:

3.28 ***(1) Integrated into a country's overall development strategy and process.*** When strategies for fulfilling EFA objectives are explicitly integrated into a country's comprehensive sector-wide strategy, as well as its overall economic and social development goals, our review of experience indicates that they are more realistic and achievable. The EFA strategic framework should have explicit references and linkages to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Education Sector Investment Program process in Uganda is one example of how EFA strategies are both integrated into the country's overall education development strategy and its PRSP. The country's EFA strategy is explicitly incorporated into the ESIP, which is in turn explicitly and coherently cross-referenced with the Uganda's macro-economic and poverty reduction strategies.

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3.29 ***(2) Good data***. Countries progress better when they have the data and capability to track, in real time, the distribution of educational opportunities, the progress made under different policies and interventions, and the impact achieved with different resource investments. A key area where information is lacking in most of the countries reviewed is the distribution of student outcomes and achievement. In Brazil, institution of a national assessment system based upon curriculum frameworks helped the country to monitor student performance and curriculum implementation and reduce inequities.

INDIA'S DPEP Program and the associated DISE data system.

DPEP now covers 271 districts spread over 18 States in India, and is perhaps the largest ever program of primary education development in the world. An important aspect of DPEP has been its clear focus on decentralized and participatory planning and monitoring of development initiatives. The effective decentralization requires more systematized data flows to support decision making at all levels. The appraisal of the educational statistics at the time of implementation of DPEP pointed to the weaknesses of the existing system to support DPEP. Therefore, a conscious decision was taken to establish a sound data collection and reporting system which not only served the needs of the grassroots but also of the educational administrators at the state and national level. Accordingly, a school level management information system was instituted and is now functional in all DPEP districts. Each district now completes a standardized District Primary Education Report Card on an annual basis. These Report Cards provide information on basic performance indicators, trends in the performance indicators, as well as information specific to the enrollment and retention of disadvantaged groups such as girls and Scheduled Tribes/Scheduled Casts. The periodic revisions of the database components have reduced the states' dependence on alternative sources of data.

The DISE database, which is part of this system, has provided valuable insights into the various aspects of primary access and retention. The timely analysis of time series and cross-sectional data has led to timely and remedial interventions in states and districts covered under DPEP. Besides highlighting the positive aspects of change in performance indicators, the study has also identified the areas of concern that require further administrative action, research and analysis.

Source: Yash Aggarwal. Progress Towards Universal Access and Retention: District Report Cards. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. 2001.

3.30 Adequate system information can also support the planning and monitoring of the strategic plan over time. The definition of minimum standards (to be further discussed in a subsequent section) for the main education indicators has been a useful tool to support policy-makers' efforts to focus investments in disadvantaged and more demanding areas.

3.31 ***3) Sound and explicit analysis***. There must be solid analysis of the implications of EFA strategies on the rest of the education system, in financial, budgetary, managerial, and pedagogical terms. The increased resource needs to support EFA must be understood within the context of sector-wide resource allocations and broad economic development strategies, where macroeconomic policies include investments in complementary inputs such as health and nutrition, water and sanitation, rural infrastructure and economic opportunities. Inter-sector and intra-sector resource allocation, institutional delivery mechanisms and flexibility in the inclusion of non-governmental agencies and private sector in the delivery of education are new features of successful sector policy frameworks.

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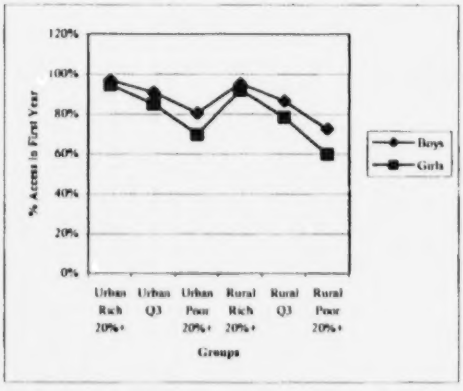
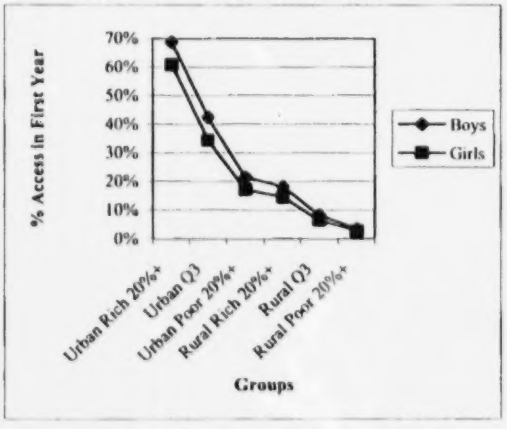
3.32 In addition, country authorities require the analytical capacity and resolve to confront the serious contextual obstacles to EFA goals. In countries with high HIV prevalence, for example, strategies must incorporate the reality that many teachers are sick and dying, and that this will affect efforts to expand access or improve quality. Situations of post-conflict create numerous competing and serious demands for resources and place the objective of system rehabilitation along side with system expansion.

3.33 In South Africa, during the change from the apartheid regime, computer project models were used in public forums and stakeholders were invited to debate over the issues within an informed marketplace of ideas. Results of this undertaking helped advocacy groups use arguments based on solid research in their policy dialogue with government and in the public debate. The research and dialogue helped level the political-economic playing field, where unequally equipped players were engaged with each other, and also removed ideology and emotion/opinion from key elements of the debate. South Africa's existing policy frameworks, in particular the South African Schools Act, can be attributed in part to these informed democratic discussions.

Sound Analysis Guides Sound Policy Formulation

Good data, and particularly good household survey data, has great potential to inform policy if it is well analyzed and utilized. The analysis of data from a recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Angola illustrates this point well. The survey data permit an analysis to be undertaken as to which population groups are more or less likely to enroll in grade 1. As Graph a, below, shows, the rural poor, and particularly, poor rural girls, are much less likely to enroll than other groups. Poor rural girls' enrollment rate of 60 percent is well below the 98 percent enrollment rate of urban boys from the wealthiest households. Most startling, though, are the differences between population groups in access rates to grade 6 – less than 3 percent of the poorest rural girls enter grade 6 while almost 96 percent of wealthy urban boys do. Sound and explicit analysis of this type shows clearly where inequities in primary access and completion rates are most severe, and indicate where resources and support need to be targeted if EFA is a priority.





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3.34 In addition, many serious contextual obstacles to EFA goals require country authorities to possess considerable analytical capacity. In countries with high HIV prevalence, for example, strategies must incorporate the reality that many teachers are sick and dying, and that this will affect efforts to expand access or improve quality. Situations of post-conflict create numerous competing and serious demands for resources and place the objective of system rehabilitation along side with system expansion.

3.35 ***(4) Wide dissemination and consultative planning.*** Many levels of government, as well as other actors outside of government must be involved in the identification of goals and definition of desirable outputs. Broad-based consultation to develop and monitor a strategic framework can help build the political commitment on the part of the public, key stakeholders, and sector and national leadership necessary to mobilize for EFA. In Uganda, the Education Sector Investment Plan provides a forum where the contents of the government's sector policy is reviewed with donors.

3.36 A consultative process will also allow for the incorporation of innovations that emerge from communities and schools into broad development plans. Otherwise, those plans were unable to respond to differentiated local needs, and the local agents usually assumed passive roles in the development process. In Mali, the PRODEC process put in place by government where NGOs and other stakeholders could critique and engage in discussions on contents of the government's proposed ten year reform program led to the inclusion of community schools in the government's strategy to increase access, as well as considerations for modifications in the national curriculum.

EDUCATION REFORM IN CHILE: A PROMISING BEGINNING

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Chile has approached education reform with a strategy of continual and incremental changes initiated by schools, rather than a comprehensive, linear action plan. Four basic factors explain the relative success of the reform process:

- A national consensus exists that education plays a strategic role in economic growth, social cohesion, and political development.
- The government has continuously and consistently made education reform a priority and has supported reform, in spit of changes in national and ministerial administrations.
- There has been macroeconomic stability and growth, making financial resources available to sustain reform.
- There is widespread public acceptance of proposed policies, which focus on the need to modernize the education sector rather than on addressing issues of control and institutional power relationships in the sector.

A decentralized strategy is being used to improve educational quality. The approach involves action at the school level, establishment of incentive systems and competitive processes, use of networks, and curriculum reform. A national call for each school to generate responses to educational challenges (projects for Educational Improvement [PMEs]) opened the door for local level innovation to become the engine for reform. In 1997, 80 percent of eligible primary schools were implementing PMEs which they had designed and which had been approved and funded by the government.

The projects are as diverse as the educational needs of the country and may involve more than a single school. The 900 Schools Program (P900) is targeted on the 900 lowest-achieving schools in rural and poor urban areas. It focuses on meeting the specific needs of the learners in those schools to increase achievement, improve teaching quality, provide books and other educational materials, and improve physical school infrastructure. Enlaces is a project that seeks to increase the use of computers in schools and create on-line learning communities, connecting primary and secondary schools to a national network and then to the Internet. Other projects focus on a variety of areas including teacher training, specialized teaching methodology and curricula for rural schools, installation of classroom libraries, and deconcentration of the Ministry of Education by transferring functions to the provincial department.

In spite of the variety of project content and methodology, there are several common elements necessary to the success of PMEs:

- A consensus must be built in the process of defining national education policies.
- Decentralization is necessary for increased responsiveness to societal demand.
- Systems must be based on incentives, information sharing, and evaluation, and should demonstrate efficient use of resources.
- A priority must be placed on equity that responds to differences, rather than providing homogenous educational services.
- There must be local level participation in the design of the educational process, generating a sense of ownership within communities.
- Teamwork and networking must support the establishment of a culture of communication.
- Experimentation and incremental improvement must be stressed, making education reform a process of social learning.

These criteria unify expectations, goals, and performance in the education sector. This approach to education reform is an incremental, inductive process of system-wide transformation. The whole of the Chilean education reform far exceeds the sum of its parts.

Source; Educational Change in Latin America and the Caribbean. Human Development Network. World Bank. 2000.

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3.37 ***(5) Flexibility and learning.*** A strategic framework must provide enough flexibility to respond to crisis. It should be capable of incorporating new data, innovations, and surprises. In Uganda, for instance, the government with the participation of key ministries (Finance and Planning) and a broad constituency of civil stakeholders continues to fine tune its strategic vision for UPE six years after first introducing the policy. This fine tuning has included revisiting textbook policy, when it became clear that books were not being made available in sufficient quantities, overhauling teacher recruitment policies, and increasing the commitment to secondary education to sustain gains from UPE policies.

3.38 When a strategic framework is flexible, it can respond to changes in the political and economic environment of a particular country and thus provide all stakeholders with a realistic and timely appraisal of what is and is not possible. A framework might be developed during times of economic growth. When temporary economic crisis occurs, the framework must be resilient enough for activities and strategies to change without losing sight of overall objectives. In Indonesia, the economic downturn of 1997 actually saw an improvement in education sector indicators because the government was able to quickly put in place a program of support for low-income families.

3.39 ***Key Lessons from this section:***

- Education strategies for EFA should be developed within the context of a broad-based strategic framework that trace realistic paths based on best information towards meeting EFA goals.
- Most progress is made when sector strategic frameworks are closely integrated with countries' broader development frameworks. The PRSP provides a ready vehicle for this.
- Sound strategic frameworks are rooted in analysis of good, timely data, and broad stakeholder consultation.
- Strategic frameworks must remain flexible to enable authorities to continue to pursue EFA objectives under changing circumstances.

(c) Ensuring the efficient use of resources

3.40 Primary education is a public good in that it yields benefits not only to the individual directly receiving the education, but also to the society at large. Increased national output, higher productivity rates, and improved public health are but a few of the public benefits garnered from primary education. Investments in girls' education, in particular, yield some of the highest returns of any development investment.

3.41 Given the high public returns to primary education, it is reasonable that primary education should be financed through the public budget. This also means that primary schooling should be provided free and without tuition charges. This does not mean that

the private sector should not be involved in the provision of primary education, but its engagement may well be considerably more limited than for other levels of education.

3.42 Of the case study countries that have made significant progress towards EFA, all but one increased the resources available for the education sector; the other country significantly improved efficiency in using resources. While enormous resourcing gaps continue between the developed and developing countries, successful countries have moved creatively to reduce unit costs. In Africa, for instance, unit costs for school construction have been reduced by half over the past decade (see Figure 6 below). A new generation of teacher financing arrangements has also reduced the unit costs for teachers by almost half in many countries, and by more than half in some. Yet, though "cutting corners" to accelerate coverage is often a necessity, pragmatic strategies to quickly attain EFA goals need to be carefully reviewed in terms of their medium and long term consequences.

3.43 A review of developing country experience (see Financing EFA paper) reaches the conclusion that higher performing countries which have achieved significant advances on EFA have tended to pursue similar policies and approaches in terms of financial inputs and utilization of those inputs. The core financial policies these higher performing countries have followed include:

- Allocation of a high share of national resources to public primary education – slightly more than 4% of GDP.
- They spend the equivalent of 12% of per capita GDP on each public primary student (which is somewhat less than many other countries allocate)
- Teachers' salaries in these countries are generally around 3.6% of per capita GDP
- They tend to hold pupil teacher ratios at around 1:40, which is somewhat lower than levels in other countries
- They generally have much lower repetition rates than other countries (usually below 10 %)

3.45 An important caveat here, though, is that for all of their progress on access and primary completion goals, none of these countries has significantly closed the quality gap with OECD countries (which spend an average of $3915 per primary student per year as compared to under $40 per year in many of the countries reviewed).

3.46 Countries vary widely in terms of the proportion of GDP they allocate to education. Low income countries spend anywhere between 1.5% and 10% of their GDP on education. Other countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Bangladesh and Laos, allocate less than 2.5% of GDP to education. Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Tunisia, on the other hand, allocate more than 6% of GDP. There is no one "correct" share of GDP that should be allocated to education. Some countries – El Salvador would be an example – made significant progress towards EFA while allocating little more than 2% of GDP to education. But such cases are rare. Significantly higher allocations have also not always translated into more rapid progress; in some countries education indicators remain low despite high public allocations. Most usually, countries making sound progress on EFA have allocated slightly more than 4%

of GDP, and this would appear to be a reasonable benchmark to guide public allocations. The adoption by many countries of a PRSP framework is providing an effective vehicle for reviewing financing and efficiency issues in the context of a national forum and reaching agreement on a sustainable financing base.

3.47 Efficiency in resource use is a hallmark of countries which have made significant progress towards EFA. These countries have exercised efficiency through policies which keep student repetition rates low (especially at the primary level), ensure teacher/pupil ratios are moderate, and maintain teachers' salaries at levels that are not so low that recruitment of qualified personnel is difficult, nor so high that budget resources are insufficient to recruit and maintain an appropriately sized teaching corps. The pricing of teacher salaries is one of the most difficult issues to address in the sector. Yet, it is a very important issue given that teachers' salaries usually amount to more than 80% of recurrent expenditures at the primary level. Disequilibria in teachers' salaries result from the fact that teachers are generally civil servants governed by national pay scales and conditions, and from the fact that they generally exercise significant bargaining power. . Teachers' salaries are sometimes excessively high, as is the case in some Sahelian countries. Here, they can often be more than 6, and sometimes more than 10, times average per capita GNP. In such cases, a relatively small, yet very high cost, teaching cadre, is stretched to teach excessively large classes, even while many children are unable to find a place at school. Elsewhere, and often in Middle Eastern countries, teachers' salaries are unreasonably low, and cannot accord them a living wage. In such cases, teachers may resort to private tutoring or moonlighting to supplement their income, neither of which contribute to a healthy education system.

3.48 It is important that countries ensure that teachers are not over- or under-remunerated. Establishing just where the balance lies, though, can be very difficult, particularly since there are important political exigencies to be considered. A number of countries have managed to take the difficult step of adjusting the unit cost of teachers' salaries downwards, so as to bring them more in line with salary levels of comparable professionals in the country. Senegal, for instance, approached this difficult issue by grandfathering the existing teaching corps and maintaining their remuneration and benefits at existing levels while it introduced a new hiring system for all new recruits. Under this system, teachers were hired on a contract basis with a considerably lower, but more sustainable, remuneration package. The government received 28 applications from qualified individuals for every post advertised under the new remuneration system, indicating that what was being offered was certainly a market wage. Orissa and some other States in India have also instituted new schemes for hiring contract-based "para-teachers", particularly in rural areas. Interestingly, many of the para-teachers hired are qualified teachers who have been unable to find employment with full civil service benefits. These para-teachers now have employment on a contract basis and have brought their skills and training to bear where they are most needed.

3.49 The creation of a "dual system" whereby teachers who are generally performing equivalent work are remunerated differently, generates some tension. Careful negotiations with teachers' unions and other interested stakeholders are crucial for such

schemes to work. Countries will vary enormously in terms of the salary levels and approaches that might be employed. Where countries opt for a "dual system" approach, it is essential that all new teachers coming into the system be subject to a clear set of rules and expectations.

3.50 When efforts are made to raise teachers' remuneration packages, the political exigencies are few. The financial implications, however, are often considerable. Budgets must either be increased or external support garnered to support the process. Such was the case in Uganda where teacher salaries were abysmally low in the early 1990s. To create conditions for a more appropriate wage level, the government first undertook a census of the teaching corps. This helped identify large numbers of "ghost teachers" – individuals listed as teachers and being paid as such, but who were not teaching or performing any professional function. These "ghosts" were promptly removed from the rolls. The savings from this, plus extra-budgetary support provided by donors, provided the financial basis to improve salary conditions for teachers.

3.51 The level of investment in school infrastructure is also a matter of concern in many low income countries, and particularly so in the Africa region. Countries tend to construct the same types of buildings, regardless of their relative GNPs: the perception of what a school building should be has tended to be much the same in countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Egypt, Mali and South Africa. Clearly, though, the relative draw of infrastructure on public resources is proportionately much higher the poorer the country. And, since it is well-established that school infrastructure contributes relatively little to student learning outcomes, investments in school infrastructure are not yielding particularly high returns. Because infrastructure costs are so high, many developing countries have looked to external donors to finance school construction. And, donor support for school construction has often contributed significantly to inefficiencies in resource utilization.

3.52 African countries have achieved some considerable success in reducing classroom costs in the past decade or so. This achievement is a major policy success for many countries where a reduction in classroom costs has long been a priority. In the 1908s, African unit costs per classroom were the highest in the world ($13,000 - $18.000). Now, they are beginning to fall more in line with those in other developing countries of similar wealth. Egypt has also achieved very significant reductions in classroom unit costs. The key to reducing costs in these various cases has been increased engagement of the private sector in transparent and competitive construction contracts. The adoption of more cost-effective and appropriate structural designs in many countries has also played a significant role.

Evolution of classroom unit cost in selected Government programs (in current US$)

Africa			Asia			LAC		
Country	*US$*	*year*	*Country*	*US$*	*year*	*Country*	*US$*	*year*
Guinea	13,450	(1989)	Bangladesh	2,700	(1980)	Brazil	6,000	(1989)
	7,500	(2000)		3,900	(1998)		8,200	(1993)
Mauritania	17000	(1984)	India	3,700	(1993)	Honduras	5,500	(1987)
	4,700	(2001)		3,100	(2001)		9,000	(1995)
Senegal	13,200	(1982)	Pakistan	8,700	(1987)	Mexico	16000	(1991)
	6,400	(2001)	(NWFP)	6,800	(2001)		10,000	(1998)

3.53 The experience of the last decade and the lessons derived from the financial policies and practices employed by countries which have made significant progress towards EFA indicates that, in many countries, there is a need for policy adjustment. Current policies in many low income countries and low enrollment countries are far from optimal. The international community and donors have an important role to play here. They can gather information across a range of country experiences and can identify and promote the more effective practices. While they generally contribute only a very limited proportion of education resources in most low income countries – generally less than 5% of national education spending – they can apply their resources in a catalytic way, using them to prompt change and the adoption of new policies.

(d) Specific strategies to address the educational needs of the disadvantaged

3.54 Most of the country case studies examined consistently showed lower public provision of schooling places in areas where poverty was greatest. Experience has also made it clear that macro-economic growth alone will not readily reduce disparities in educational opportunity. Certain groups (the poor, the rural, girls, indigenous groups, the disabled, etc.) systematically have less access to good quality education, and the benefits of macro-economic growth rarely trickle down and translate into improvements in educational opportunity. Specific strategies designed to provide educational opportunities to underserved and disadvantaged groups must be a central part of any EFA strategy, and can be remarkably successful. However, donor-supported strategies for disadvantaged populations have often relied on user fees or community contributions and have frequently perpetuated existing inequalities. Eliminating user fees, targeting subsidies, and scholarship and stipend programs have great potential to improve educational opportunities for the disadvantaged by addressing demand-side constraints; these strategies must be coupled with strategies to address supply-side constraints by providing good schools within walking distance of poor families and ensuring that funds lost through elimination of user fees are available at the school level.

The Bangladesh Female Secondary School Assistance Program: Improving Girls' Enrollment and Retention Rates Using a "Package" of Interventions

Bangladesh's Female Secondary School Assistance Program (FSSAP) was launched in 1993. Its objective was to improve rural girls' enrollment and retention rates in secondary education. The program cost was US$88.4 million.

The program was designed to support a "package" of interventions which would increase the prospects that rural girls' would enroll in, and remain in, secondary school. A central component of the program is the provision of cash stipends to girls. The stipend is transferred to via the commercial banking system to individual bank accounts held in each girl's name. The program also transfers rural girls' tuition and examination fees directly to schools.

Other measures aim at making schools more attractive to girls and their families: efforts to increase the proportion of female teachers, provide water and sanitation facilities, improve community engagement, and provide occupational skills. Efforts to improve education quality were limited.

All unmarried girls of secondary school age who reside in rural areas were eligible to benefit from the program. Continuance in the program, however, required that girls: (a) attend school for at least 75% of the days in the school year; (b) maintain their academic performance above a set minimum; and (c) remain unmarried.

The program has been very successful in increasing rural girls' enrollment and retention rates. Stipend beneficiaries have increased from 187,320 in 1994 to almost 900,000 in 2000. Girls now account for 54% of secondary enrollments in areas covered by FSSAP. Girls' attendance rates have improved significantly, and at 91% are above boys' 86% rate. The proportion of girls achieving pass marks in school examinations, at 89%, is now above boys' rate of 81%. Girls' dropout rates from the program for non-compliance are low. Quality remains low.

3.55 If addressing the educational needs of disadvantaged groups was easy or inexpensive, then EFA would have been achieved quite rapidly in most countries. Unfortunately, the specific reasons why certain children systematically have fewer education opportunities are complex, often counterintuitive and even controversial because of political and cultural realities. As a country approaches EFA goals, the reasons why certain children do not enroll or stay in school become proportionately more complex. And, the "unit cost" of addressing the educational needs of the last 10 percent of children out of school is almost always much higher.

3.56 Poor households often do not have the means to cover the costs of a primary education, including the fees, books, uniforms, etc., for their children. And, in poor households, young children, and especially girls, are often involved in food production and economic activities which are important to the households. Culture obviously also plays a role, but its effects vary widely across regions and only in relatively few cases

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does it seem to play a more important role than poverty in determining educational opportunity.

3.57 The experience of the past decade has shown, though, that programs which target the disadvantaged can be very effective. Interventions which lower the opportunity costs of schooling, such as scholarship and stipend programs, younger sibling care, and provision of water points and grain mills in schools, can be very effective in drawing and keeping more children in school have been particularly effective when well-designed. Experience also shows that efforts to reach the disadvantaged are usually more successful when they are built around "packages" of targeted interventions, or strategies which aim to tackle the full range of barriers. Both the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) in Uttar Pradesh State, India, and the Female Secondary School Assistance (FSSAP) program in Bangladesh provide good examples of programs which have supported targeted "packages" of interventions to increase disadvantaged groups' schooling opportunities with very considerable success.

3.58 There are special challenges to be faced in addressing the educational needs of disadvantaged groups that are geographically disbursed throughout the general population. And, there is relatively little experience to draw on regarding effective ways of reaching these children. The growing number of **orphans** in countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS is an immediate concern. In Uganda, for instance, orphans constitute 20 percent of children younger than 15 and, in Malawi, 16 percent. . Children whose parents die work more, attend school less, fall sick more often, and suffer higher tendencies towards social pathology. **Handicapped children** are also often severely underserved. **Street children** rarely are reached by educational services. And, in war-affected areas, many children who should be in school are hard to find, hard to get into school, and hard to make sure they remain there through the cycle. The proportion of **children in war-affected areas** receiving education is usually very low: during much of Sierra Leone's recent civil war, for example, hundreds of thousands of children were completely unable to attend school. EFA strategies will consequently need to reflect the realization that these pockets of educational disadvantage will require the most intensive mobilization of effort

3.59 ***Key Lessons for reaching the disadvantaged:***

3.60 Children who do not go to school (or do not complete schooling) are by definition "disadvantaged", and in most countries these children have specific characteristics that deprive them of the same educational opportunities as others. As a consequence, any effective EFA strategy must include interventions that specifically seek to redress the factors which are keeping these children out of school Research shows that poverty tends to be the most common reason why children are out of school. But rural residence and being a girl are also very important factors. The following elements are particularly important to take into consideration.

- Sound analysis, based on good data, is fundamental in identifying which groups are disadvantaged and determining the reasons why they do not enroll in school or complete the cycle.
- Specific targeted initiatives can be enormously successful in reaching the disadvantaged. This is exemplified in India's DPEP program and Bangladesh's secondary school subsidy program for girls.
- Countries which have had the greatest success in reaching the disadvantaged have instituted an holistic approach, instituting "packages" of interventions which address identified economic and socio-cultural barriers. They generally address both supply and demand side constraints. "Packaged" approaches have been particularly effective in improving girls' educational opportunities.

(e) Directly addressing the quality/access continuum.

3.61 Getting children into schools that do not provide at least the minimum level of achievement is hardly a good use of resources. A high level of dropout and, consequently, low level of completion defeat efforts to improve access. Studies have shown that there may be a literacy and numeracy threshold of about six years, i.e. it takes the rough equivalency of primary completion to reach a sustainable change in these factors needed for improvements in labor productivity and other development indicators.

3.62 In many countries, retention and completion rates have been considerably lower for some groups – specifically rural children and rural girls, although overall enrollment figures were up. Thus, not only is access inequitably distributed in most society, but so is achievement

3.63 Three principal considerations have emerged in terms of the quality/access continuum. First are questions of ***sequencing***. EFA strategies might favor rapid expansions of access in the first instance, but attention must quickly turn to consolidating progress through investments in learning. Second, quality-enhancing interventions that are ***targeted for disadvantaged groups*** may have the greatest cross-cutting impact for EFA goals. Finally, the use of ***minimum learning standards*** provides a vehicle for maintaining focus on access and learning issues simultaneously.

3.64 **Sequencing.** It has often proven difficult for education authorities to pursue both access and quality enhancing objectives simultaneously. Many countries have made sacrifices in established norms for construction, recruitment or curriculum to widen access to educational opportunities. However, rather than have one set of goals completely eclipse the other, authorities may consider strategies of alternating expansion and learning support. With financial support from the international community, Uganda has been able to reverse early drops on the input side by focus in recent years on the provision of quality inputs, and there is some indication that learning gains are increasing. This is in contrast with Malawi, which has yet to receive significant support for quality inputs and where the UPE gains are in serious jeopardy.

3.65 A typical evolution concerns student-teacher ratios. In many countries, demand has outpaced the capacity to recruit enough qualified teachers leading to overcrowded classes. The rush to fill those positions has often led to the recruitment of untrained teachers who receive little support or supervision. If strategies were simultaneously established to ensure that classrooms were opened when new teachers were deployed or untrained teacher received regular supervision, mentoring and in-service preparation, this would go a long way to reducing the stress on the system and ensuring that access gains are sustainable.

3.66 If a coherent strategic framework is established, it will include specific discussions on how to address these tradeoffs. With an explicit analysis of the consequences of certain decisions to promote access, it may be easier to avoid an uneven development of the sector. For example, an analysis of needs in terms of teacher, teacher support services, non-salary pedagogical inputs, building maintenance should be conducted to accompany plans to build additional classrooms.

3.67 Improving quality as an objective differs in one fundamental way from efforts to improve access: the definition of quality is ever changing. What constitutes a trained teacher, an adequate textbook, or even an acceptable level of student achievement will evolve as education systems become more established. Expectations from education systems continually spiral, particularly within a globalizing context. As a consequence, decision makers will need to continually revise their quality objectives as they expand access to cover the last disadvantaged groups. This again argues for a comprehensive strategic framework that enables decision makers and other stakeholders to continually evaluate the relative benefit of interventions that expand access and improve quality.

3.68 Indonesia represents an interesting case in this regard. To maintain the expansion of the lower secondary education achieved during the early 1990s, the government had to reduce per student outlays and other funding during the economic crisis later in the decade. As a consequence, the quality of instruction fell significantly, leading to lower labor market perceptions and thus remunerations for junior secondary graduates.

3.69 **Targeting of disadvantaged groups.** Just as with access, quality is also inequitably distributed. In most countries, the same groups who are disadvantaged in terms of educational opportunities usually receive a substantially lower quality of instruction. Compared to others, children in remote areas are often taught by teachers with lower qualifications who are absent more often, are less likely to have access to basic pedagogical materials (e.g., books, school supplies), and attend schools that are more poorly managed and receive less supervision. Girls and other groups that are less likely to enroll in school in the first instance, tend to drop out and repeat more and perform less well in exams. Thus, the additional investments that are needed to enroll these disadvantaged groups in the first place (and as argued above, these investments often come at a higher unit cost) require complementary interventions to ensure success over the long term.

3.70 From our case studies, there are numerous examples of interventions that address the specific needs of educationally disadvantaged children. These tend to fall into one of two categories. First, there are interventions that attempt to compensate for poorer schooling conditions of disadvantaged children, particularly the lack of available resources to ensure an equal pedagogical environment. These include textbook schemes, teacher incentives and support programs, and distance learning technologies:

- ***Textbooks:*** There are three fundamental approaches used to ensure that more textbooks are available to disadvantaged children. First, selection and distribution networks can been decentralized so that more remote areas can be reached more easily. For example, parents associations and local school committees can be put in charge of distributing and caring for schoolbooks at the school level. Second, a combination of cost recovery with targeted subsidization creates the demand for textbooks that can be met by the private sector. In some cases rental schemes have been used to purportedly ensure commitment of parents and sustainability. However, in very poor communities, these schemes have worked less well than providing free texts to students. Finally, free textbooks have been distributed to poor communities. This requires the development of effective replenishment strategies.

- ***Teachers:*** Despite pronouncements to the contrary, all schools are not alike. There are always schools where individual teachers will prefer (not) to teach. Under such circumstances, how can an education system ensure that all students have the " right" teachers who are willing to teach? Incentives schemes can be developed that draw teachers to certain schools, but these are often difficult to target or are insufficient to attract the most experienced teachers. Thus, teachers that are assigned to more remote or less desirable schools are usually the least equipped to address the daunting pedagogical tasks of these sites. Research has shown that these teachers require ongoing support and in-service training. A number of countries have experimented with school-based teacher support services (Uganda, Lesotho, Benin, Guinea) with promising results in terms of the effectiveness of instruction.

- ***Distance Education:*** Providing instruction through radio can help reach children in remote areas and support teachers that have minimal training and support. Interactive radio approaches (i.e., radio programs that are accompanied by lessons that are provided by teachers) are particularly promising as they do not try to replace the teacher, but rather augment the teacher's pedagogical performance. These approaches require significant institutional capacity, however to keep up to date. Interactive radio programs exist in Guinea, Egypt and Haiti.

3.71 Second, certain interventions address learning issues in ways that provide particular support to disadvantaged children. Use of first-language instruction is a good example of such approaches. In nations where first-language instruction precedes acquisition of the national language, students often acquire literacy in the second language faster and more easily than those denied initial education in their first tongue.

3.72 In Guatemala, disadvantaged, poor indigenous children who began their education in their native Mayan mother tongues and gradually learned Spanish were compared to children of similar ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds who had been taught only in Spanish for the full six years of primary school (the traditional system). The first group achieved better ability to speak and write Spanish.

3.73 In the Philippines, the Ministry of Education undertook a pilot in four local languages, transitioning to Filipino and to English (the "Lingua Franca" Program). The children in the pilot schools performed better academically in all subjects, including Filipino and English, than did children in control groups learning only in Filipino or English.[1]

3.74 The EDUCO project in El Salvador promoted curriculum improvement focusing on content relevance for the local communities. As a result, increased participation of parents, students and schools engendered higher participation of girls in the system, better retention rates and higher completion rates.

3.75 ***The use of minimum learning standards.*** A number of countries have approached the question of balancing equitable access and quality through the adoption of a minimum quality standards framework. Through a consultative process, minimum input and outcome standards are developed, at national and more local levels (e.g., student-teacher and student-classroom ratios, textbooks per student, pedagogical materials per classroom), the "distance" of schools to these standards is measured and this information is compiled in different ways to inform different resource allocation decisions. There are three key advantages to this type of approach. First, the establishment of such a framework of standards, particularly if done in a consultative manner, keeps access, equity, and quality issues all in focus for decision makers, educators, and the general public. It has proven to be a powerful way to allow different stakeholders to be aware of the importance of maintaining quality in an equitable manner while expanding access. Second, it can be a powerful tool to help decision makers allocated additional resources in a more efficient and effective manner. For example, the use of minimum quality standards allows decision makers to address questions such as: Where should the next teacher be placed in order to bring overall teacher-student ratios within a district into an acceptable range? Finally, the use of such frameworks can provide greater transparency with regards to issues of equity. Seeing the case of Brazil, the reform of the education finance system was able to decrease radically the unequal per pupil distribution of educational revenues in primary education. Currently, a minimum per pupil revenue is guaranteed for each student in the primary system. The minimum standards were revised to accommodate for differences in costs between lower and upper primary education.

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[1] Dr. Felicitas E. Pado, Professor, College of Education, University of the Philippines, and Ms. Aurora M. Samson-Reyna, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Luzon Colleges, at a presentation during a day-long seminar on Second Language Literacy, sponsored by the International Literacy Network and held in Washington, D.C., on July 17, 2001.

3.76 The use of quality standards, however, allows a country to control the trade-offs between quality and access objectives in a much more powerful manner, even taking into account changing financial circumstances. In several countries, rapid expansion of access has implied use of low quality teachers. With a judicious use and application of minimum standards for teacher qualifications, the educational systems must create mechanisms to improve the quality of teachers over time in order to guarantee not only access to schooling, but also of the quality of instruction.

3.77 In Guinea, the Ministry of Education has engaged in a process of defining Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels. After a series of regional consultations, "acceptable" and "good" levels were established along a series of dimensions (e.g., student-teacher and student-classroom ratios, textbooks per student, pedagogical materials per classroom). For example, it was decided that student-teacher ratios should be between 40 and 60 in urban areas and between 25 and 40 in rural areas. Improvements to the education management information system allowed the education ministry to determine the position of every school, district and region with regards to this range. It was found that despite the fact that there was an extreme teacher shortages in the country, there was also substantial variation. This information was subsequently used by planners at regional, district and school levels to determine the deployment of newly recruited contract teachers. District level planners found this approach to be particular helpful as they had an objective instrument to make what had sometimes become a very political decision.

In Cambodia, The Quality Improvement Grants Component is the centerpiece of government of Cambodia efforts to improve quality of education. The goal is to establish a process in which the government policy both supports and is enriched by practice at the school level. The grants process begins with development of a vision for effective schools. A set of animators with that vision in mind then works with community and school cluster leaders to engage them in a discussion about effective schools, in identifying problems and solutions in their own schools, and in developing cluster improvement plans as a basis for preparing grant proposals. Those proposals are reviewed by a grants committee to ensure that they are in line with national priorities and informed by best practice. Once final decisions are made, clusters are notified that their grants have been approved and funds are distributed and accounted for in an open and transparent manner with community participation. Animators return to help clusters implement their programs and to assist in monitoring and evaluation. Their lessons from practice are systematically gathered and fed back into further development of the vision of effective schools and improvement of their animation process.

3.78 ***Key Lessons regarding the quality/equity continuum:***

- Planning for EFA should include a sequencing of quality improvements
- Quality improvements that are targeted to the most disadvantaged groups may have the greatest impact
- The use of minimum quality standards provides a useful tool for maintaining quality, equity and access considerations in focus simultaneously.

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(f) Delegating responsibility and accountability.

3.79 EFA efforts will ultimately be judged by whether children are coming to school on a regular basis and on whether they are learning. As a consequence, decision makers, managers and practitioners must be held accountable for these results. To ensure this, EFA strategies must first include mechanisms that make information on children's attendance and learning available to all stakeholders in a fashion that easily accessible and can truly inform decision. Second, EFA strategies that include interventions and policies that maintain the school and classroom as the essential component for educational change. Finally, to ensure that accountability exists at all levels of an education system, increased attention should be given to the roles, responsibilities, and capacity of middle managers.

3.80 ***Information for accountability.*** Producing and using information for the purposes of accountability requires a capacity to collect and process timely data and transform it into a form that truly informs decisions and holds authorities accountable. As discussed in section xx, the use of minimum quality standards is one way in which information about the state of schools can be used as a management tool, a vehicle for policy dialogue and an instrument for accountability. The increasing popularity of national assessments points to another potential way of producing information to hold education systems accountable.

3.81 National assessments can provide information about what children are learning and how this relates to a host of variable ranging from school and home environment to demography to curriculum. Thus, they allow planners and managers at all levels from the school to the nation determine what different mix of inputs and process should be considered. Assessments can also be provided comparisons between schools, districts regions and countries and as a consequence can spur improvement through implicit or explicit competition and by making decision makers responsible for improvement. This latter use of assessment, however, must be tempered by considerations of variations in local conditions and the needs of different populations. Using assessment for purposes of individual accountability is usually more expensive than using these methods to identify compensatory interventions because the latter only requires testing of a representative sample.

3.82 In Chile, on the basis of annual census assessments, incentives are provided to both low performing and high performing schools. About 10% of schools are identified as being in need of assistance on the basis of their performance in language and mathematics and efforts are made to improve performance through additional inputs and support. Schools that receive the highest rating receive monetary awards.

3.83 In Uruguay, teachers were very concerned that the proposed national assessment system would be used to appraise their professional performance and could stigmatize them. Government consequently included representatives of the teachers' union and other stakeholders in its assessment advisory group. Teachers subsequently cooperated with the establishment of the system. The assessments did not hold teachers directly

accountable for student results, but rather was used to identify possible needs of improvement for schools and other aspects of educational quality.

3.84 Although national assessments of student achievement constitute powerful tools, they are not a panacea to the problems of either accountability or student achievement. They are often difficult to conduct to recognized technical standards, leading to inaccurate data. They are complicated and costly undertakings that can significantly stretch the institutional capacity of education systems, with unintended consequences for other management functions. Furthermore, using them to inform public debate in a constructive manner has also eluded many countries, leading to recriminations or disappointment rather than the identification of possible action, a reordering of priorities, or a readjustment of objectives. Finally, national assessments cannot replace evaluations that should be carried out on a day-to-day basis in the classroom.

3.85 Traditionally, the principal assessment system of most education systems has been the end-of-cycle examinations. These high-stakes exams determine who will benefit from additional schooling opportunities, as well as the quality of these opportunities. Using examinations as an accountability vehicle has some shortcomings because they tend to narrow the focus of instruction to exam taking and do not necessary provide much information on the state of intermediary levels of the basic education. However, existing examinations systems have very important symbolic value and are not easily replaced by other types of assessment tools. As a consequence, attention should usually be given to how these examinations can be improved to inform decision making in a more accurate manner.

3.86 ***Accountability at the school and classroom level.*** Focusing at the school level means three things. First and foremost, resources and inputs must *arrive* at the classroom level at the right time and amounts. In many countries, EFA objectives are undermined because of bottlenecks in the resource allocation process. When school and district managers receive resources late in the school year, they must scramble in crisis mode to retain EFA objectives.

3.87 Many ways exist to ensure that pedagogical inputs and teachers are available to schools in time – there an ongoing debate with regards to resource allocations as to whether it is better for certain purchases to be made centrally (for reasons of economies of scale) or whether school and district managers should be given budgets and provided with the discretion to make purchases themselves (thus using local providers and ensuring quality and timeliness). Neither system is necessarily more "accountable" or "cost-effective". Leakage and lateness in delivery often plague centralized distribution systems; poor accounting practice and inappropriate purchases (i.e., buying products that do not meet minimum specifications) can plunge a school into crisis. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of different allocation schemes, all must be judged by the same criteria: do resources reach the classroom level in the appropriate quantity and quality, and do they arrive on time?

3.88 In Northeast Brazil, transfer of funds to local government in 1993 led to higher unit costs per classroom ($8,150 compared [i] to $6,000) [ii]. Local government assumed responsibility for managing classroom construction in the Philippines in 1996 [iii]. However unit cost remained high: $10,400 per classroom on average [iv]. When Bangladesh shifted school construction from the Facilities Ministry to local government in 1998, the decrease in unit cost was negligible (US$3,900 against US$4,000).

3.89 Second, focusing at the school level means that flexibility is provided to local school managers to respond to local conditions. Schools that are able to adopt community demand-responsive strategies incorporating local knowledge can draw and keep more children to school, and serve their educational needs better. They can draft flexible school calendars, alter curriculum, prepare learning materials, adjust teaching methods and create a more child centered participatory method of learning.

3.90 DPEP Karnataka has introduced a novel approach of learning through play (Kali Nali). This is an activity-based, child-centred participatory method of learning for Classes 1 through 4. Textbooks based on competencies and Minimal Levels of Learning (MLL) are used. The programme is extremely popular with parents, teachers and children. In addition, in Karnataka and other states, textbook-less, child-centred "joyful learning" (Nali Kali) has been introduced. This is a further extension of the above approach, which allows children to proceed at their own pace. Teachers have shown to prepare many varieties of low-cost/no-cost teaching and learning materials, which are likely to enhance the quality of student learning. Utilization of multi-sensory approach may be of particular value to low achievers and slow learners. Repetition rates for both boys and girls have declined significantly in 1999-2000—boys' repetition is at 3.45 for 1999-2000 and girls' stands at 4.16 for 1999-2000.

3.91 Finally, focusing on the school and classroom means that local accountability structures are created. Schools are well-positioned to exercise greater discretion precisely because they could avail themselves of existing and locally-based mechanisms of accountability and restraint. In Ethiopia, centralized decision-making on resource allocation, procurement and personnel management are identified as systemic weaknesses. Low levels of civil service pay and unpredictable resource flows are a severe constraint on the performance of teachers and the ability to attract and retain qualified school personnel. To address the issue of attracting and retaining better and more capable individuals as teachers new entries were hired at higher levels so that they may earn better salaries even as new recruits.

3.92 As one way to concentrate efforts at the school level, many World Bank-supported projects in the late 1990's included a component for channeling block grants, or school improvement funds, to the school level. This attention to school-level financing is one of the striking changes in such education projects over the decade. Although little hard information regarding learning outcomes or changes in enrollments is available, learning results appear to improve through these programs. The school grant component in Uruguay seems to have had a particularly beneficial effect on disadvantaged schools. Lasting impacts were measured in all schools classified as

"disadvantaged". In other schools, there was a correlation between successful implementation of school grants and academic performance in the 1999 National Cognitive Assessment. Notwithstanding, changes in other aspects of the education system took place. There were development of management skills at the school and community level, and parents and community became more involved in the educational process, improvement of school climate and as part of systemic education change, school grants may contribute to the improvement of retention and enrollment in the long term.

3.93 In Guinea, for example, where Africa's oldest school grants program has been running since 1994, school-level management skills have been strengthened and mid-level managers have been identified—these individuals would not have been noticed previously, when there were very few resources locally to manage. School grants then should be seen as best addressing: a) the need for changing education delivery systems; b) encouraging communities to take an interest in the running and outputs of schools; and c) empowering teachers and principals to think and teach creatively and address their own professional needs.

3.94 Prospects of school-based management depend on whether school directors can guarantee a reasonable degree of fiduciary comfort including credible safeguards against the leakage of resources intended for classrooms. Schools must demonstrate their willingness to hire and fire teachers on the basis of merit rather than patronage, and show intent to implement adoptive strategies according to local realities that maximize efficiency, access and quality of learning. In sum, schools must earn their right to exercise autonomy and flexibility by demonstrating their capabilities, including their ability to exercise restraint. Governments can design instruments that allow schools to graduate to higher levels of responsibility and discretion. Eligibility criteria can be defined around good stewardship of inputs, thereby reducing the fiduciary and patronage risks associated with school-based reform.

3.95 ***Reinforcing middle management.*** The case study review revealed successes and failures of decentralization. Yet although decentralization is not a strategy to be universally advocated, EFA success will require approaches that (1) ensure that resources reach the school and classroom level in a consistent and responsive manner; (2) provide flexibility to local school managers to respond to local conditions; and (3) create local accountability structures are powerful ways of both meeting EFA objectives and consolidating EFA gains.

3.96 There have been two major trends in education reform. First, there are many endeavors that attempt to "get the policy right" and thus reinforce national-level decision making apparatuses for education. Second, because learning occurs in the classroom, and many have observed that national policy decisions do not always trickle down to the school level, certain programs have concentrated their efforts to directly affect teaching and learning at the classroom level. Both approaches have their pros and cons and they are certainly not exclusive. However, what has often been neglected is those cadres that are located between the school and the national ministries – the district officers, the inspectors, the training institutes, the pedagogical advisors, and the regional directors.

These actors are the conduits by which policy is communicated to the school level and information about the state of education is brought to the attention of national decision makers. Also, they are the actors that are often called upon to respond to crisis, must make resource allocation decisions, and ensure the day-to-day administration of school systems (from exams to teacher deployments). To truly make education systems accountable, these mid-level educational authorities are critical actors.

3.97 Typically, middle managers in education sectors do not do their job effectively because of three shortcomings. First and most important their roles and responsibilities are often ill-defined and contradictory, with a mix of pedagogical support tasks, school and teacher inspection, information collection, mail delivery and resource management. On one hand, this ambiguity means that no task is done very well. On the other, middle managers can easily avoid accountability as a consequence. Second, middle managers are often poorly resources in financial and technical terms. They often do not have the capacity to visit schools on a regular basis, and they often have no training as managers, because they are usually promoted from the classroom. Finally, rarely are their mechanisms in place that hold middle managers responsible for results within their jurisdiction. Address all three issues can considerable increase the effectiveness and accountability of EFA strategies.

3.98 Reinforcing the middle does not necessarily mean that education systems should be decentralized. Even highly centralized systems require a cadre of deconcentrated authority that is professional, institutionally capable and accountable.

UGANDA – Improving Accountability

Since the end of the 1980's, Uganda has had an ambitious decentralization agenda. Functions such as teacher recruitment, school inspection, capitation grant distribution, and textbook distribution have all been decentralized to the District level. In addition, Districts are responsible for the collection of data for the Education Management Information System. As a consequence, an enormous amount of capacity building has had to take place under the difficult context of UPE implementation. Decentralization also imposed a new challenge for accountability and transparency in the use of funds transferred from the central government to the districts and, eventually, to the schools. In 1996, an expenditure tracking study found out that only about 28% of these funds were actually reaching the schools. Given UPE objectives and the increasing amount of resources with which the districts were being entrusted, it became imperative that this record be improved, and this goal has largely been achieved: the most recent surveys show that 90% of the funds now reach the schools.

Uganda publishes in the national press the amount of grants (including teacher salaries) transferred to the districts. Information on the number of schools, pupils, teachers, as well as their relationship in the formula for the determination of capitation grants, is also shared with the districts by MoES. Schools also have a role in the accountability exercise. Districts must notify schools of the amounts received from the central government and then display this information for each individual school at the sub-county level, and in their own administration offices. Schools are required to post on a wall their budgets and the exact amount of funds received, while it is the headteacher's duty to draw up a monthly report for the District Chief Administrative Officer and forward a copy to the SMC's chairperson. In addition to the established guidelines regarding the allocation of capitation grants, SMC's and PTA's are increasingly involved in decisions about the use of capitation grants within that framework, and about the School Facility Grant (SFG) for classroom construction.

3.99 ***Key Lessons regarding accountability:***

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- *Creating mechanism where stakeholders and decision makers are provided with up-to-date and relevant information regarding the performance of the education system (including student achievement) is critical.*
- *To ensure the greatest effectiveness,*
- *The use of minimum quality standards provides a useful tool for maintaining quality, equity and access considerations in focus simultaneously.*

(g) Sustainability.

3.100 **Financial sustainability.** Increasingly, countries are developing financial sustainability models as part of the overall EFA planning process. Education systems are often placed under severe stress during times of economic crisis. During the economic crisis of 1997, Indonesia was able to protect enrollment rates (and even increase them) by putting a student stipend regime in place. But quality, already low, appeared to decline even further. This pattern seems fairly predictable: pedagogic inputs and support systems will be among the first to come under pressure in times of economic downturn, and economic crisis will affect both the supply of and demand for education.

3.101 **Systemic sustainability**: Maintaining improvements in the quality and equitable access of basic education requires that other parts of the education system develop in lockstep. In many countries, high repetition rates at the primary level are associated with the lack of capacity at the secondary level of education systems, or other educational or labor market opportunities for those who successfully complete primary or basic education. Similarly, rapid expansion of access can lead to a reduction of the qualification levels of teachers because the capacity of teacher training colleges is too low to produce a sufficient number of trained teachers. Gender equity targets at the primary level may be adversely affected by lack of equity at higher levels of the system.

3.102 **Institutional sustainability:** Many innovative measures and strategies adopted by countries to meet EFA goals represent non-institutionalized responses to current constraints to system growth. Community schools, alternative delivery systems, contract teachers, crash teacher training programs, stripped down curricula, and special social funds often produce impressive short-term gains in enrollment and quality of instruction, particularly for disadvantaged groups. However, these innovations have a limited "shelf-life" by their very nature. In many cases, these actions represent temporary solutions to profound problems that need to eventually be replaced by a more permanent strategy. Also, countries such as Bangladesh that have experimented with the establishment of special funds to provide scholarships and other supports to individual students through donor project funds, face the challenge of ensuring that important gains are not lost, and social disruption created, when donor financing dries up.

3.103 **Dynamic sustainability:** In an ideal world, donors will provide funding to fill a financing gap until a country's economy grows to the point where it can assume full fiduciary responsibility for the development of a system. Considering the substantial gap in the quality of instruction between developed and developing countries, an acceptable level of quality may be very difficult to assess, particularly when there are issues of

competitiveness in a globalizing context. What level of learning makes a country competitive? What level of development would be required to sustain this level of learning? What is the role of the international community as a consequence? There are no easy answers to these questions. There is nevertheless an important consideration for EFA strategies: countries that aim too low in an effort to achieve only short-term financial sustainability may find themselves locked into a low-quality, low-gains equilibrium in the long term. The international community, in helping countries achieve EFA goals, will need to provide a sufficient level of support to avoid this, often going beyond immediate short-term sustainability.

3.104 ***The case of teachers.*** Most countries that have quickly expanded educational opportunities have recruited a great number of new teachers. This move has created sustainability concerns across all the categories discussed above. Countries need more teachers in the classroom; they need them to do more; and they need them to work in more difficult places with populations that have special needs.[2] Yet teachers represent the largest cost category of the education system. In the urgency to meet EFA objectives, new teachers are often deployed with minimal preparation, with substantial risk of unraveling the professional fiber of the teacher corps.

3.105 Thus, most EFA strategies will have long-term implications for the teacher corps. Many countries must face the budgetary implications of increasing the number of teachers or their utilization. As a consequence, a strategic perspective regarding the costs and benefits constraints in a global perspective is very important. The entire set of issues involved with teacher management needs to be considered, for example: training costs related to teachers, how teachers' salaries are determined, what the salary structure is and how this can be modified, transition mechanisms for contract and public servant teachers to new career plans and devise/revise the incentive structure to improve performance.

3.106 A does provide an opportunity to address systemic inefficiencies in resource allocation, and this is also the case with teachers. Pressure to get teachers to schools that have chronically experienced shortages might lead to a revisiting of teacher incentive structures as well as deployment practice. In Brazil, for example, the introduction of new finance mechanisms made it possible to guarantee revenues to raise the teacher earnings distribution in municipal and rural areas and promote increases in the supply of teachers.

4. Moving forward.

4.1 A key lesson to emerge, and one which has very broad applicability, is that progress on EFA cannot be assured through centrally driven and mandated programs. Progress is best achieved when goals and desired outcomes are specified in relation to particular contexts, and then incentives and support are provided to locales and individual organizations to encourage and help them work towards the goals and outcomes.

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[2] In some cases, the overall number of teachers is sufficient, but they are not necessarily deployed in the most effective manner. There are many countries that have idle teachers in urban areas, while rural schools and classrooms are underserved.

Effective and sustainable change depends on buy-in, commitment and change at the grassroots level.

4.2 What, then, is the role of the donor community in this process? How can the international community encourage, support and underpin these efforts, given the acknowledged need for country-specific action, flexibility, and modification and innovation in approach? A uniform, standardized approach will not be effective – the package and type of support provided will differ across countries since responses will be tailored to each countries' circumstances and needs, and since donors will have varying levels of engagement in different countries. However, several core premises should underlie the support provided, reflecting the different lessons learned presented here.

4.3 A driving premise will be to accelerate support to countries with sound action plans and which are evidencing clear commitment to those plans. This means that transparent and fair criteria must be agreed upon. This is consistent with the Dakar Framework for Action proposing an annual Monitoring Report. The Monitoring Reports are the most obvious tool against which to assess country commitment to, and progress towards, EFA. There will be a high level of technical support in their production and wide buy-in and collaboration in their preparation. Criteria will include a balance of "worthiness" and "need".

4.4 National action plans can be expected to include the following elements:

- ***The most reliable and valid data available***
- ***Comprehensive analysis of the trade-offs, constraints and policy issues that must be addressed for a country to meet EFA goals***
- ***An ongoing consultative process that both validates the strategic plan and provides opportunities to monitor progress and provide continuous input to modification***
- ***Options for financing of EFA in an efficient and effective manner, in the near and long term***
- ***Strategies for meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged groups***
- ***Approaches that balance educational quality with access objectives***
- ***Mechanisms to increase and maintain effective accountability for educational improvements, including measurable indicators of progress that are widely reported***
- ***Strategies to address the sustainability of EFA efforts***

4.5 If the National Plan meets these broad criteria, the Monitoring Reports can provide the necessary information to judge progress towards EFA goals. The Monitoring Reports should be data driven and be prepared with widespread collaboration and input from a range of institutions and agencies, including government, civil society, NGOs, multilateral and bilateral agencies.

4.6 A National Plan that meets these criteria can be expected to serve the following purposes:

It represents a useful gauge for political commitment. If a country is able to establish a credible National Action Plan that meets the above criteria, and it is able to effectively use it to shepherd the education system towards EFA objectives, this is an adequate proxy indicator for a high level of political commitment. Also, by focusing on the National Action Plan, donors can avoid the difficult and contentious situation of engaging in the political process of a country or attempting to measure such notions as "political will".

It provides a framework for donor coordination and collaboration. Improved coordination will help streamline procedures countries must typically follow in requesting donor support, ensure greater uniformity in the criteria governing allocation of support, and reduce the burden for countries in reporting to multiple donors. Donors could commit to multi-year support to the implementation of mutually recognized strategic framework of a particular country at a country-specific education donors' forum organized for that purpose, much along the lines of the current, but broader based, donors' support.

It constitutes a vehicle for championing the EFA goals, strategies and actions of specific countries within different forums. A credible National Action Plan is a country's best advocate for its education system. Donors, government authorities, education stakeholders can all use this Plan as a way of defending the education sector and rendering it a priority.

4.7 External support for EFA is currently very fragmented and not always targeted to the countries that most need it. With the potential for increased external resources, it will be necessary to establish a mechanism that provides the coordination and harmonization of support, with representation of international agencies.

4.8 India's District Primary Education Programs have been successfully conducting joint annual review of programs for more than half a decade. Joint review responsibilities are formalized through a joint memorandum of understanding signed by the participating donors. Review missions should be coordinated by the government and held jointly to minimize disruption of ongoing activities by the donor teams. The India Joint Review Missions are characterized by a first week of joint planning and discussion among donors and with government, during which government presents its report on progress toward the program indicators. The second week is devoted to site visits of schools and district offices—donors are encouraged not to confine their visits to those areas where they are directly providing support. The third week is given to preparation of a joint aide-mémoire and follow-up discussions with the government.

4.9 This formula is increasingly being adapted for use in other countries. In Mali, for instance, all major donors have signed a memorandum of understanding under which donors take rotating turns providing leadership and working with government to organize the review missions. It would seem appropriate that joint donor review missions in the various countries provide quantitative and qualitative reviews that would be incorporated as a key part of the monitoring report. Standardized reporting templates and formats,

with sufficient flexibility for country-specific analysis, could be discussed and agreed among donors and with EFA country representatives.

4.10 Grant support could be critical in supporting some countries' effort on EFA. There are various options for increasing country access to grant support, but the allocation of grant support needs to be driven by fair and transparent mechanisms. The option of providing IDA grant support for education initiatives is under discussion and, if approved, could channel significant amounts of support through tried and tested mechanisms. It could also provide for budgetary support.

5. Conclusion.

5.1 The move to EFA has high visibility worldwide and high support. The lessons of experience show that countries can achieve significant progress towards EFA goals in spite of severe resource constraints. There are known technologies for increasing access coverage and learning outcomes, although these will in many cases require development of broad-based political support that may not yet exist. While unprecedented new levels of international support, coupled with domestic policy reform, will be required to reach the Dakar goals by 2015, these goals are within reach for most countries. This calls for new flexibility on the part of the international community and, almost certainly, a new implementation and monitoring mechanism.

5.2 The challenge of closing the access gap is great. The challenge of closing the learning gap is even greater. This must be a focus of all EFA efforts. It will require evolving policy adaptations and change on the part of EFA countries, and greater technical and financial support from the international community than is now commonly recognized. This is where the success or failure of the Dakar framework will be measured.

Issues for further discussion:

1. How can demand for education best be generated and sustained-- for girls? In unstable environments (conflict, high HIV/AIDs prevalence countries)?

2. Grinding poverty is a key constraint to schooling. Poverty reduction is a sine qua non of successful EFA implementation even at the same time as education is itself a sine qua non of poverty reduction. How best can this vicious circle be broken?

3. What is the appropriate role for other sectors in influencing education --transport and distance to schools, water and sanitation and school health, overall economy and economic returns to education? Are existing EFA mechanisms able to take advantage of intersectoral tools, including PRSP?

4. How can overall service delivery --public expenditures, governance and accountability structures – best be improved?

[t] Brazil, WB-financed Second Northeast Education Project (Loan 3604-BR) 1993-2000, SAR, Report 11298-BR).

[u] Brazil, WB-financed Northeast Education Project (Loan 1867-BR) 1980-1989, PCR, Report 8266-BR), calculations from tables pages 16-17.

[v] Philippines, IDA-financed Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP)

[w] Classrooms of the IDA-financed Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) are estimated Pesos 270,000 equivalent to US$10,400 in 1996, SAR p. 31

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